



# UPDATE

Montana Department of Commerce

## Winter Advertising Paying Off for Montana



What impact is Travel Montana's Winter advertising having on visitation to Montana? This pertinent question, along with numerous others, were answered this fall in a Winter Campaign Conversion Research study commissioned by Travel Montana.

The research found that Travel Montana's 2003/2004 Winter campaigns generated over 3,700 trips to Montana during the past year. These trips, in turn, generated almost \$8.4 million in additional visitor spending. As a result, for every \$1 spent by Travel Montana on winter advertising, visitors spent \$17.51 in the state. Additionally, many people indicated that they will visit Montana in the future or return to the state. This indicates that over the long term the economic impact generated from this campaign will increase.

Also revealed in the study was that the Montana ski and snowboard visitor is more likely to be upscale, mature couples/empty nesters and single people while Montana's snowmobile visitors were more middle-of-the-road families. Skiers and snowboarders also tend to plan their vacations equally at any given timeframe from less than one month prior to travel to more than four months in advance, thus indicating that weather does not always play a factor in

planning a ski trip to Montana. Conversely, the majority of Montana's snowmobile visitors plan their vacations less than one month out, suggesting that this audience is most likely closer to home and can travel on shorter notice to accommodate snowfall.

While the economic impact numbers are encouraging, delving further into the research revealed that Montana still has its work cut out in firmly establishing itself as a winter destination. Montana's winter product is not as well established as the competing states of Colorado and Utah as it relates to skiing and snowboarding. In response to the research, Consumer Marketing Manager Sarah Lawlor states, "We are finding that in order to build our winter business, we must sharpen our focus and target our marketing on key market areas that show propensity to generate winter visitors to Montana. Geographic areas that are showing the most promise include northwestern and selected northern mid-western states."

Strategic Marketing & Research, Inc. out of Indianapolis, IN, completed close to 1,400 telephone and Internet surveys from respondents of Travel Montana's 2003/2004 Winter Campaign, including both the ski and snowboard, as well as the snowmobile campaigns. Since both efforts were elements of the overall Winter campaign, the results are presented together and comparisons are made between the ski/snowboard and snowmobile campaigns. The full study, along with the PRIZM NE system segment designations, are available at: [www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/research](http://www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/research).

In addition, a separate research report is available that delves deeper into information about Montana's "Winter Visitor." It extrapolates the data from the larger study and focuses exclusively on those respondents that visited during the "winter months" of November through April. This report is also available at: [www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/research](http://www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/research).

## Helena Hosts MT Tourism & Recreation Industry Gathering

Montana's Capitol City is set to welcome Montana's Tourism & Recreation Industry at the 31st Annual Governor's Conference on Tourism & Recreation, March 21-22. The Red Lion Colonial Hotel is the scene for two days of networking, education and entertainment.

Keynote speakers will feature "Emerging Lifestyles & Travel Trends: Implications for Marketing Montana" and "Montana's Image as a Vacation Destination & Market Responses to the Images We Send." Meanwhile, some of the breakout sessions include: World Wide Web Marketing; Community Partnerships; Crisis Communication and Recovery; Publicity Boot Camp; and Pricing Your Product to the International Market.

Governor Brian Schweitzer will be on hand for the Tuesday night banquet and tourism awards ceremony. Montana Commerce Director Tony Preite will participate in Monday's luncheon presentation and Park's Division Administrator Doug Monger returns for a lunch presentation on Tuesday. For further details on the Montana Governor's Conference, check out [www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/conference](http://www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/conference). All this and more in Helena! We'll see you at the conference—Celebrating the Montana Experience.

## Did You Know?

- n Six Montana ski resorts were featured in *Travel & Leisure*, February 2005 issue.
- n *Horizon Air*, January 2005, recounted adventures in ice fishing in Montana in "Frozen Assets."
- n The March/April 2005 issue of *Northwest Travel* featured "Prehistoric Treasures of MT" regarding the newly developed Dinosaur Trail.
- n "Paddling Through Time" in *Paddler*, December 2004, highlighted Lewis and Clark on the Upper Missouri.

Montana Department of Commerce, Promotion Division, Betsy Baumgart, Administrator  
406-841-2870 • TDD 406-841-2702 • fax 406-841-2871 • web: [visitmt.com](http://visitmt.com)  
industry intranet: [travelmontana.state.mt.us](http://travelmontana.state.mt.us)

## ABA Leads Available

More than 500 American Bus Association (ABA) operators from the United States and Canada gathered recently in Chicago, IL, for the annual ABA convention. Marlee Iverson of Travel Montana was very excited to have 39 scheduled appointments with tour operators, an increase over the last several years. Leads from this event are at [www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/ourprograms/groups](http://www.travelmontana.state.mt.us/ourprograms/groups). This is a password-protected page, so if you have not already received your password, please contact Marlee at 406-841-2895 or [miverson@mt.gov](mailto:miverson@mt.gov).

## On the Big Screen

The 2nd Annual Big Sky Documentary Film Festival lit up the Wilma Theater screen when 74 non-fiction films were reviewed in six categories during the eight-day film festival in Missoula. Three separate competitions for Best Documentary Feature, Best Documentary Short and the Big Sky Award were held as part of the Festival. The "Welcome to Montana" reception, hosted by the Montana Film Office (MFO) and Manager Sten Iversen, was "a big success" with over 15 documentary filmmakers attending the reception. Meanwhile, the next film festival held in Montana will be the 28th Annual International Wildlife Film Festival (IWFF) from April 30-May 7 in Missoula. For more information on IWFF events and films, check out [www.wildlifefilms.org](http://www.wildlifefilms.org).

The Montana Promotion Division and MFO also reported that "Big Sky on the Big Screen Act" HB 584 (Harris) was introduced to the 59th Montana State Legislature on

February 16, before the House Taxation Committee. For further information on this and other legislative updates, go to [www.travelmontana.state.mt.us](http://www.travelmontana.state.mt.us).

## Training Available

Have you decided when you will design that high-impact orientation program for your new and returning staff that incorporates all the latest tourism statistics, value of our visitors and motivational customer service principles? Relax, it's been done for you.

Montana Superhost is at your service to conduct a three-hour, on-site program to provide valuable information to your management and staff. New this year is local and regional tourism information to meet your training needs. To schedule a session in your community, contact Jodi Smith at 406-756-3674 or [superhost@fvcc.edu](mailto:superhost@fvcc.edu).

## Welcome Aboard!

Travel Montana welcomes two new staff members this month: Barbara Sanem and Andy Hyatt. Barb is the new Industry Program Compliance Specialist, while Andy is the Assistant to the Administrator, Betsy Baumgart. While new to state government, Barb is very familiar with the tourism industry and accounting, having served as bookkeeper for the West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce for almost six years. Besides number crunching, she enjoys traversing Montana via cross-country snowmobile racing in the winter and scenic backroads in summer. Meanwhile,

Andy is not new to the position, since she served as the temporary Administrative Assistant for the past three months. She is an avid racecar fan and able to field a variety of questions regarding race tours or tourism. Make sure to welcome them both while attending the Governor's Conference this month!

E X P L O R E !



## L&C Camp Life

In June, living History Interpreters will re-enact the duties of the Corp of Discovery during June 1805. This will include events such as Camp Deposit, Shields, Shields in Highwood, Hunters at Medicine River and Retracing the Portage. For details and tickets, log onto [www.explorethebigsky.org](http://www.explorethebigsky.org).

*Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided to disabled persons on request.*

## Calendar of Events

### March

- 5-9 Sales Trainings in Lyon, Nice, and Paris, France
- 10-16 ITB Trade show in Berlin, Germany
- 21-22 Montana Governor's Conference in Helena

### April

- 14-16 RMI Round-Up in Boise, ID
- 15-17 Locations Trade Show in Santa Monica, CA
- 17-21 MT post Round-Up fam tour

*For all of the latest Montana tourism industry information log on to:*  
**[travelmontana.state.mt.us](http://travelmontana.state.mt.us)**



**Travel Montana • Montana Film Office**  
**Montana Department of Commerce**

301 S. Park  
PO Box 200533  
Helena, MT 59620-0533

STD PRSRT  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Helena, MT  
Permit No. 20